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Mr. President, Mr Executive Director, Excellencies, dear colleagues

Let me first congratulate you, Mr. President, and all the bureau members on your election. We look forward to working with all of our partners under your skillful guidance.

Let me also indicate that Switzerland is very proud to participate at this UNEA-2. With UNEA-2, another major step becomes normal in the evolution of the process of strengthening international environmental governance and UNEP as the anchor institution of international environmental governance and policy.

Switzerland is deeply committed to a strong and political relevant UNEP which is effectively and efficiently fulfilling its important mandate with regard to:

- providing the scientific information needed to understand the global environmental challenge;
- providing overarching policy guidance and advancing the political framework to address these challenges;
and
- promoting and stimulating implementation of the policies needed.

UNEP has grown over the last years. One person who has crucially contributed to this positive evolution is clearly UNEP's Executive Director Achim Steiner.

Let me thank you, Achim, for your visionary leadership of this important institution which is so dear to us and which is so important for the world.

Your personal commitment was crucial to bring green economy at the top of the international agenda, under your leadership, UNEP developed important policy instruments such as the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

And, thanks to you, the environment had a charismatic and visionary voice and face.

Let me thank you wholeheartedly!

Let me also briefly address some of the key issues on which UNEA-2 should provide guidance:

- one of the very important issues to be addressed will be to bring UNEP's working cycle in line with the rest of the UN;
- we should use this opportunity to also change the timing of the election of the UNEA bureau: the bureau should be elected at the end of each session to be able to prepare the next session for which it will be in charge;
- Similarly important will be the decision on the relationship between UNEP and MEAs to ensure that UNEP and MEAs support each other mutually rather than compete with each other. As the anchor institution of the global environment regime, UNEP is ideally positioned to provide the secretariat functions of MEAs. This provides strength, vision, and political visibility in the UN system. We have to ensure that this support by UNEP to MEAs is adequate, effective and efficient and provides real added value to the work of the MEAs. UNEP brings MEAs into a family, it can support their work with scientific information and awareness raising, and it strengthens MEAs by anchoring them in the UN system.
- UNEA 2 should also clarify the important role UNEP plays with regard to the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. UNEP is in the best position to contribute to the further development of relevant

indicators, and UNEP is similarly best positioned to report on the state of the environment and the environmental dimension of Sustainable Development.

- With regard to the substantive area,
 - o UNEA 2 should make sure that the important work on microplastics and marine litter continues and promotes a good coordination and cooperation between relevant institutions and MEAs;
 - o UNEA-2 should continue to support and promote the work on enhancing synergies between the biodiversity related MEAs; and
 - o UNEA-2 should support the work for more coordinated reporting under the chemicals and waste MEAs, give guidance to the global chemicals outlook, and ensure that the important work on lead and cadmium continues.
- Finally, Switzerland does believe that the important decisions and resolutions, which we are going to negotiate and adopt, should be complemented by a ministerial statement reflecting the ministers' common political vision and commitment with regard to the environment.

Let me conclude that my delegation is looking forward to working with all our partners in a constructive and solution-oriented manner over the whole week to make UNEA-2 a success.